

SOME TIME IN THE DISTANT FUTURE, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST
LOOKING BACK AT LATE 20TH CENTURY CANADA WILL MARVEL
AT WHAT A WASTEFUL SOCIETY WE WERE. DIGGING AROUND
IN OUR LANDFILL SITES, SHE WILL CORRECTLY ESTIMATE
THAT IN THE 1990s, EACH CANADIAN THREW AWAY ABOUT
ONE TONNE OF WASTE MATERIALS EVERY YEAR!

DID YOU KNOW?

About 1/3 of our waste is paper and paperboard. Another third is yard and kitchen waste. The rest is divided among glass, metals, plastics, textiles, wood and other materials.

THINK BACK THROUGH YOUR DAY: THE EMPTY
TOOTHPASTE TUBE, THE CEREAL BOX,
THE POP CAN IN YOUR LUNCH, YOUR GUM
WRAPPER, THE FOOD YOU LEFT ON YOUR
PLATE AT DINNER. NATURAL RESOURCES SUCH
AS WATER, WOOD AND FOSSIL FUELS GO INTO THE

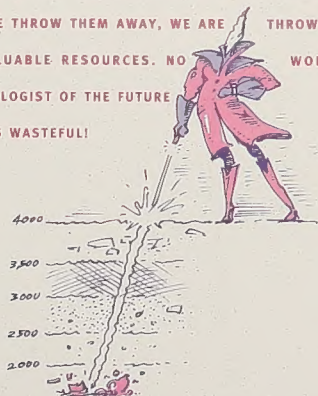
PRODUCTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF ALL THESE THINGS.

WHEN WE THROW THEM AWAY, WE ARE THROWING AWAY

OUR VALUABLE RESOURCES. NO WONDER THE

ARCHAEOLOGIST OF THE FUTURE

FINDS US WASTEFUL!



REDUCE,
REDUCE,

reduce!



There are many things you can do to reduce the amount of waste you produce.

Avoid food packaged in individual servings. Buy in bulk. It saves money and the environment.

Buy multi-use items rather than single-use when possible.

Use your own cloth bags for shopping.

Donate your old clothes to charity.

Buy beverages in refillable containers.

Use rechargeable batteries.

Share your newspapers, magazines and books with a friend.

Wrap presents in reusable cloth bags or reused wrapping paper.

Rent items you use infrequently.

FACT:

If we all work at reducing our own wastes, together we will make a BIG difference.

WORD MATCH

Can you match these terms to the statements below?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. mobius loop | 1. The first line of defence against too much garbage. |
| B. reduction | 2. The liquid that filters through landfills. |
| C. methane | 3. One of the greenhouse gases produced by rotting garbage. |
| D. carbon dioxide | 4. The name of the recycling symbol. |
| E. everybody | 5. Who is responsible for reducing the amount of waste we create? |
| F. leachate | 6. Two types of waste that make up the largest portions of our garbage. |
| G. kitchen and yard waste | |
| H. paper | |

Compost!

Pack your lunch in reusable containers.

Support your community's recycling programs.

Buy products that contain recycled materials.

Use both sides of every sheet of paper.

Use a durable refillable mug or glass at school or work.

Encourage your friends and family to follow your good example.

Be creative. There are many more ways we can reduce the wastes we produce.

To find more about the Environmental Citizenship Program, write to:

Environment Canada
Inquiry Centre
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3



100% recycled paper,
all paper consumer fibre

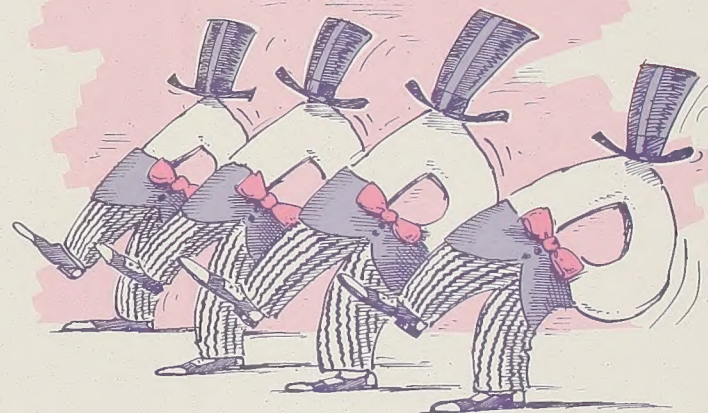
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WASTE
MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION
SERIES

THE 4 Rs

Reduce, reuse, recycle, recover



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Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada



Environmental
Citizenship

Garbage

**GONE
BUT NOT
FORGOTTEN!**



Most of our garbage is sent to landfills, dumps or municipal incinerators. But with more and more people producing more and more waste, landfills are filling up faster than we can find new sites for them. And landfills create new types of waste. As garbage decomposes, moisture filters through it, producing a toxic liquid known as leachate. Modern landfills are designed to reduce the amount of moisture that reaches the garbage, and many have a system to collect and treat the leachate.

Decomposing garbage also produces two greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide and methane, an invisible, odourless, and highly flammable gas. At some big landfill sites in Canada, methane is now being collected and burned to produce energy.

Water and oxygen are required to break down garbage. But water and oxygen are in short supply deep in a landfill, so decomposition takes place very slowly. In fact, when researchers cored down into a landfill in the United States, they discovered newspapers over 30 years old still in readable condition!

DID YOU KNOW?
Landfill sites account for about 38% of Canada's total methane emissions. Methane is 20 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

Incinerations are sometimes used to burn solid waste under controlled condition. They reduce the stress on landfills, but they create other environmental problems. The ashes must be disposed of, either at a landfill, or, if they are toxic, at a hazardous waste facility. Burning garbage also produces acid gases, carbon dioxide and toxic chemicals that must be treated with expensive air pollution control equipment to avoid contributing to acid rain, ozone depletion and air pollution.

DID YOU KNOW?
17 million Canadians (nearly 2/3 of us) have access to recycling.

Recycling is just one way to reduce wastes. To be really effective, we have to incorporate the 4Rs – *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover* – into our daily routine.

Reducing the amount of waste we produce is by far the most effective way to battle the flow of garbage into the landfill. Packaging makes up about half our garbage by volume, one-third by weight.

- when you shop, try to find products that have little or no packaging.

What we cannot Reduce we should try to Reuse.

- repair your old radio rather than buying a new one

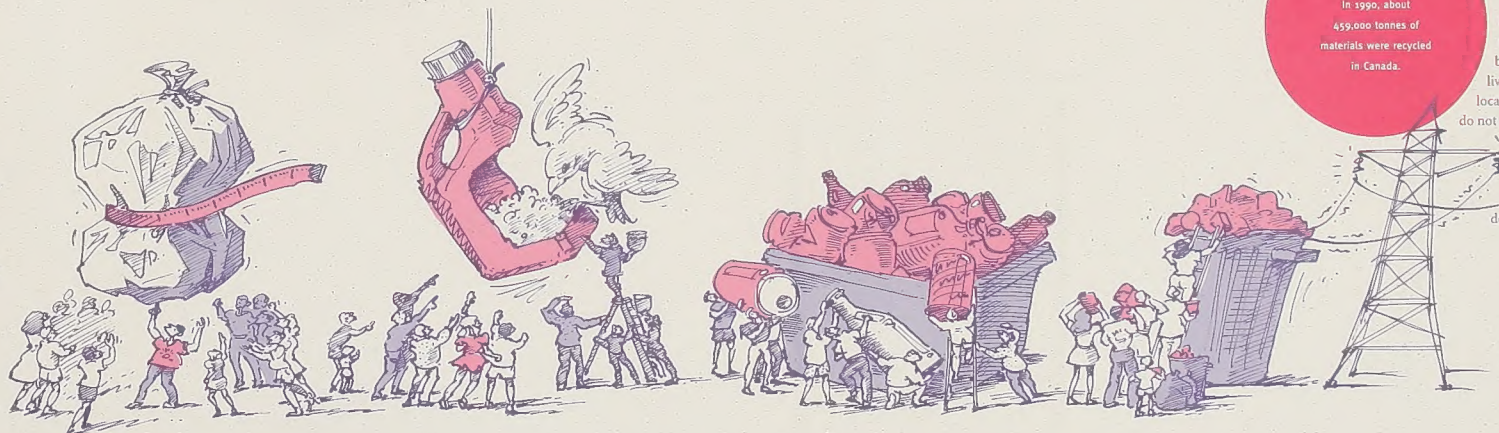
- use jars, tins, and plastic containers to store leftovers, bulk foods and household items

- buy durable, good quality products that will last.

Materials and packaging that cannot be reused should be recycled at home, work and school. You can also contribute to recycling by purchasing recycled and recyclable products.

- at the store, ask yourself these questions: Can this product or its packaging be reused or recycled? Was it produced from recycled materials? Whenever possible, choose products that meet these criteria.

Finally, Recover energy from wastes that cannot be used for something else. This fourth R is difficult to put into practice by individuals, and is geared more toward industry.



THE
LANGUAGE
OF THE

Rs

The mobius loop, an international recycling symbol, can be found on many products.



A mobius loop on a light background means that the packaging or product can be recycled where facilities exist.



A light mobius loop on a dark background advises consumers that the product contains recycled materials.

Along with the mobius loop, there will be figures indicating what percent of the recycled content is post-consumer and what percent is post-industrial. Post-industrial recycled products contain materials left over from the manufacturing process. This material has not been used by consumers yet. Products with post-consumer recycled materials are preferred, as they have already been used by consumers at least once. In this way, they are "more recycled" than post-industrial products. But beware!

Products displaying the mobius loop may not be recyclable where you live. For example, many local recycling programs do not collect and recycle cardboard. By learning what you can recycle in your area, you can make wise decisions while shopping.

FACT:
In 1990, about 459,000 tonnes of materials were recycled in Canada.